

MEALTIME, HAPPY TIME

Mealtimes are more pleasant when shared with others. Take time out of your busy schedule to eat together and talk with your family. Include your toddler in the family meals.

In this section, you will find...

- *Benefits of family mealtimes*
- *Tips for pleasant mealtimes*
- *Tips for picky eaters*
- *...and more!*



Benefits of Family Mealtimes

Eating together as a family is important. Read about the benefits of family mealtime below.

- Helps your child eat a variety of new foods.
- Provides a sharing time for your child.
- Helps the family grow closer together.
- Helps your child have a better food intake.
 - Teaches your child to use good table manners.



Tips for Pleasant Mealtimes

What are some ideas for happy mealtime table talk? Try talking about these things with your family.

- Favorite foods
- Things you did today
- Plans for the week
- Favorite places to go
- What are your ideas for mealtime table talk?

Tips for Feeding Picky Eaters

Follow these simple suggestions to get your child to try new foods.

- Set a good example. You cannot expect your child to like many kinds of foods if you don't.
- Offer new foods along with ones you like. You may need to offer a new food 20 times before your toddler will eat it!
- Don't worry about short "food jags." Toddlers often get tired of eating the same food if you don't make a big deal out of it.
- Keep in mind that your toddler's picky eating is not your fault! It's not his fault either! Your toddler just happens to like or not like certain foods.



More Tips for Mealtimes, Happy Times!

- Give foods that are the right texture. Be sure to cut food into small pieces.
- Toddlers need smaller portions. Have regular meals and healthy snacks. Do not allow your child to beg for snacks throughout the day.
- Children eat slower. Allow your child time to eat. Let your toddler feed him or herself. It's okay to let him use his fingers to eat.
- Your child will watch and learn from you. Eat together at the table. Turn off the TV!



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